

MONDAY MANNA

7 October 2019

THE FIVE 'P's' OF WORK FROM GOD'S PERSPECTIVE

By Rick Boxx

Many leaders have a very limited view of the plans and intentions God has for our work. So, it helps to have an occasional reminder that when we go to work, we are there as His servants. Here are some of God's reasons for establishing work, each of which in the English language begin with the letter "P": purpose, provision, productivity, pleasing to the eyes, and providing order.

Let's begin with **Purpose**. Think of God as a military commander overseeing a war. Many of His people are soldiers, but some are cooks, mechanics, bookkeepers, or marketing people who recruit soldiers. Each person has an individual role to play toward the overarching purpose of winning the war. In Proverbs 19:21 we read, *"Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails."* We need to understand that our work matters to God, whatever our role happens to be. Strive to discover and carry out your appointed vocational purpose in a way that contributes toward God's ultimate, eternal purpose.

The second of God's reasons for work is **Provision**. When God was creating the heavens and the earth, He performed His work in a way to assure that man and all animals had a means of provision and sustenance. In Genesis 1:29 we read, *"Then God said, 'I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.'" Likewise, the work that God has ordained for us to do is partially designed for us to provide daily provisions for our needs. Unfortunately, many people believe provision is the only purpose for their work, leaving a void in life.*

A third of God's reasons for work is **Productivity**. In the 19th century, it would have seemed impossible that the earth could ever produce enough food to feed seven billion people. However, God provided divine insight to a number of inventors that helped to usher in the Industrial Revolution. Their inventions took productivity to a level that allowed food production to skyrocket, exceeding all expectations.

When God created man his first command was, *"Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it"* (Genesis 1:28). He desires for us to be fruitful or productive in all that we do, including our work. Increased productivity better serves our customers and is more fulfilling for us personally as we strive to improve.

The fourth reason God ordained work can be termed, **Pleasing to the Eyes**. When I was a banker, I handled the financing for a new pristine golf course. When the course was completed, I played the second round of golf ever played on that course! As I stood on the impeccably manicured fairway, nestled in a stunningly beautiful setting, and surrounded by animal life, I found my heart instantly connected to God by the beauty I had experienced.

In Genesis 2:9 we read, *"The Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground – trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food."* God was concerned about creating something not only practical and functional, but also aesthetically pleasing to others. As we approach our work, we should strive to do likewise.

The last of the "P's" for the Lord's reasons for creating work for humankind is **Providing Order**. We serve a God of order, not chaos. He took a dark, formless world and gave order to it, including days and seasons, allowing us to better manage our time. Genesis 1:14 tells us, *"Then God said, 'Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years.'" Lawyers, accountants, and many other professionals help those of us who create chaos to put some structure and order to our lives. Our work sometimes best serves God by bringing order into a chaotic world.*

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

Before reading this "Monday Manna," if someone had asked you to describe God's purpose for work, how would you have responded?

Does this discussion give you a different perspective about how God intends for us to approach and perform our work each day? Why or why not?

Which of the five purposes cited for work makes the most sense for you – and why? Which do you find most difficult to understand or to apply? Explain your answer.

If God truly does have specific reasons for us to pursue our work, what difference should that make as you prepare to go to work each day?

NOTE: If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages:

Ecclesiastes 2:24-25, 3:22

2 Corinthians 5:20

Ephesians 6:5-9

Colossians 3:17,23-24; 4:1